

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Graduate School of Education

Decision Analysis I
Assignment #1

Assignment 1: Using Indicators, Rankings and Ratios to evaluate the ***Condition of Education*** in New Jersey

Are New Jersey schools a model for the nation or are they corrupt, dysfunctional and underperforming?

Much these days depend on whose blog you read, which radio station you listen to or newspaper or online news source you most frequently read. For this assignment, students will be place into teams of two and the teams will be split down the middle – as nearly as possible – such that half of the teams will have the goal of preparing policy briefs explaining why New Jersey schools are failing miserably while the other half will prepare policy briefs explaining how New Jersey schools are doing quite well.

You will be preparing what is referred to as a “Data Driven Policy Brief” in Chapter 2 of the text. You will be applying the data analysis tools of chapters 3 – 5 – developing and/or using existing indicators, ratios and descriptive statistics to make your case. We will not, in this assignment be looking at “relationships” among variables – not yet, that is. You are expected to draw on a combination of financial data, student outcome data, and other possible data evaluating how much is spent on schools in New Jersey, how good or bad New Jersey teachers are, how rich or not New Jersey course offerings might be, and how well or not well New Jersey students perform.

Specifics

- 1) Depending on your group, you will be charged with making a case to support your assigned task
- 2) Possible data for this assignment
 - a. NJ Assessment and Report Card Database (Outcome)
 - b. Comparative Spending Guide (Finance)
 - c. Any other NJDOE Database which you feel would be pertinent for this class
- 3) Use the model for data-driven policy brief in Baker & Richards (2004) to guide your writing
- 4) Use PowerPoint to present your findings to the class